

C.A.T.S Semester 3 Review

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Where am I? This was one of the first questions asked when we started this semesters C.A.T.S course and my answer on my personal project proposal was '?' I am a mature student still working on another career whilst trying to develop an avenue into a new career, whilst still keeping a level of income appropriate to the needs of myself and my family. This is probably the answer I should have given at the time but the problem is I am spending a lot of time looking at where I am going and that is the question I don't have an answer to. Although none of us have a crystal ball this part of CATS is designed to help us figure out an answer to that question or at least look at the possible avenues that may be available to us.

For my personal project I decided that I would try and integrate myself into the local new media scene, in the hope of meeting new people to discuss what is happening in the real world at the moment, to try and gage the possibilities that may be available to me in the future and to try and see if there was a particular area or field that I may wish to progress towards.

I felt that if I was going to be taken seriously by anyone within the industry I would have to display a professional persona, so I started working on increasing my designer profile. I put into practice Search Engine Optimisation techniques to improve the rankings of my website and these have been very successful. I have also added Google Analytics to my site so that I can see how many people visit my site how long they stay on for and which sections are gaining the most interest. This has been useful especially seeing that people from outside of the United Kingdom have been viewing my website.

I have also joined portfolio websites and numerous social and business networking websites to try and make myself as available and easy to find as possible and if you search for my name on Google the majority of the top listings all now refer to me, so that has been a success.

I also had business cards made which I have distributed at some of the local networking groups. I researched these groups and joined them in order to make useful contacts and I can also say that this has been a success as I have met some very interesting people who have given me different insights into different areas of the local new media industry. The highlight of this has to be attending the Hull Digital Live conference, not only was it Hulls first digital and technology conference, it was also my first conference of any kind. There were some incredibly interesting speakers including Rory Cellan-Jones (BBC Technology Correspondent), Charles Arthur (Technology Editor - The Guardian), Anand Verma (Director of Digital Strategy - Sapient), Jaan Orvet (noded.biz) and Mike Butcher (UK and Europe Editor - Techcrunch). I learnt a lot of information that day not only about the local industry but also about the national and world industry.

Although throughout this process I believe I have raised my profile locally and I have learnt a lot about the new media industry, I am still unsure where my

future may lie and this makes it hard to decide where I could centre my research but I believe there in is the answer. I will continue to look for possible avenues and paths for the future but for now I will concentrate on learning as much as I can about as many things as possible in order to have a good grounding in whatever I may choose to do.

Another aspect of the project that I set for myself was to investigate routes into teaching. I attended the teaching workshop which was incredibly interesting but it was also a little bit short and I feel that a more in depth look at teaching would have helped me further. The one thing I did take from that lesson was something I had never considered, it was the sheer job satisfaction displayed by the lecturer when he talked about how people where genuinely happy to have learnt things, some students had even expressed gratitude that the information they had learnt had changed their lives, increased their confidence etc. He even described it by saying there is no greater feeling than teaching. (So that made me think why are all teachers so miserable? lol).

Not only did I attend a teaching workshop, the same day I helped Sarah Humphreys deliver a workshop to fellow second year students, looking at using the internet as a medium to promote themselves. I did some research and identified some sites that I believed are useful to show and I prepared an overview of some important information. I enjoyed helping to deliver this workshop, I do not worry about speaking in front of people and this helped me a lot. It is my opinion that confidence in yourself and your knowledge of a particular subject matter is very important when it comes to teaching. I found delivering the workshop quite easy, I believe this is because I had superior knowledge of the subject I was asked to deliver. If I were to pursue a teaching role in the future I feel I could only do so with the experience and knowledge that working within the new media industry could give me, so I would need to work within industry before pursuing a teaching role.

To gain more information about teaching I researched routes into teaching this was useful although I could not find any direct routes into teaching for my chosen field of work.

During our lectures we have also looked at professional practises and considerations that may affect our professional lives, looking at topics such as Ethics, Sustainability, Legislation, Market Research and financial planning.

This work if I am honest was boring in parts but also useful, there are considerations that you need to take when working in the real world. I already have knowledge and experience of a lot of the subjects covered as I have been running my own business for fifteen years but it was good to look at and consider how the considerations and situations may differ in my new career from those which I have encountered in my current career.

I feel the work we have done this semester has been useful and interesting although I am not entirely certain that I have achieved the outcomes I may have hoped for at the beginning of this process.

I had hoped to know more about possible the avenues open to me and to have a clearer indication of a particular route in which I may have chosen to follow in my future endeavours.

I believe I now have a more informed outlook on the possible paths to follow but unfortunately I am no clearer on what may be the right path for me.

I will continue to look and learn wherever possible and I will continue to try and place myself in the right places to meet people, in the hope that at some point things may become evidently clearer.